

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 REYKJA 00390 131948 Z

54

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EURE-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 PRS-01

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INFO COMICEDEFOR

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CINCLANT

S E C R E T REYKJAVIK 0390

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR IC

SUBJECT: ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE (IDF) RETENTION ISSUE

REF: REYKJAVIK 0380 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FONMIN AGUSTSSON KEPT HIS PROMISE TO US (PARA 6 REFTEL) AND IN HIS ALTHING SPEECH ON IDF ISSUE APRIL 12 DID NOT INVOKE ARTICLE VII NOR DID HE MENTION ARTICLE VII. HE INDICATED HOWEVER THAT TIME IS APPROACHING TO REVIEW THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT. FONMIN, IN EFFECT, IS GIVING US TIME TO PRESENT ARGUMENTS TO HIM OUTLINED IN REFTEL. IT IS STILL URGENT WE MAKE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE PARA 5 REFTEL SOONEST. END SUMMARY.

2. LENGTHY FORMAL ALTHING DEBATE ON ALL ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY PRIOR TO RECESS NEXT WEEK TOOK PLACE EVENING APRIL 12. FONMIN MADE FOLLOWING REMARKS CONCERNING IDF ISSUE. QUOTE:

" ANOTHER ISSUE WHICH I HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH OF LATE IS THE SO CALLED DEFENSE ISSUE. IT WILL BE ADMITTED THAT NOT AS MUCH HAS BEEN DONE ON THIS ISSUE AS SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE. THIS IS PRIMARILY DUE TO WORK BEING PERFORMED ON THE FISHING LIMITES ISSUE WHICH, FROM THE BEGINNING, HAS HAD ABSOLUTE PRIORITY AS FAR AS THE GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED AND ESPECIALLY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 REYKJA 00390 131948 Z

AS THIS CONCERNS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. A RELATIVELY DETAIL-
 TAILED STUDY HAS BEEN MADE ON THE ECONOMIC INFLUENCE ON US IF
 THE IDF LEFT THE COUNTRY. THIS STUDY HAS BEEN MADE TWICE,
 A YEAR APART. THE OPINION OF NATO HAS BEEN SOUGHT REGARDING THE
 IMPORTANCE OF THE MILITARY BASE AT KEFLAVIK AIRPORT FOR NATO'S
 DEFENSE AND A REPLY HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE NATO COUNCIL
 AND HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.
 CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE
 VIEWS OF A NEUTRAL PARTY REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
 KEFLAVIK BASE. THIS HAS PROVEN VERY DIFFICULT AS NEUTRAL PAR-
 TIES ARE VERY RELUCTANT TO UNDERTAKE THE TASK. HOWEVER, A
 SWEDISH SPECIALIST HAS MADE A STUDY OF THE ISSUE AND HIS CON-
 CLUSIONS HAVE BEEN IN HAND FOR SOME TIME NOW. I WAS, TOGETHER
 WITH SOME OFFICIALS FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, IN WASHINGTON
 LAST JANUARY AND TALKED ABOUT DEFENSE MATTERS WITH THE U. S.
 SECRETARY OF STATE AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEFENSE DE-
 PARTMENT AND MY REPORT ABOUT THIS TRIP HAS ALSO BEEN HANDED
 OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS
 COMMITTEE. THE NEXT STEP IN THESE MATTERS WILL BE TO DECIDE
 WHEN THE REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT IS TO COMMENCE AND I
 AM HOPEFUL THAT THIS CAN HAPPEN SOON. REGARDLESS OF DIFF-
 ERENCES OF OPINION REGARDING THE GOAL OF SUCH A REVIEW, IT SEEMS
 THAT NEARLY ALL ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT SUCH A REVIEW TAKE PLACE.
 IT IS COMPLETELY NATURAL THAT A TWENTY YEAR OLD AGREEMENT,
 WHICH WAS CONCLUDED UNDER COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES,
 NEEDS TO BE REVIEWED".

3. SPEAKING FOR THE OPPOSITION INDEPENDENCE PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN
 GEIR HALLGRIMSSON SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE DISCUSSION
 IN THE ALTHING OF IDF ISSUE. REASON FOR THIS PROBABLY WAS THAT
 BOTH THE PRIMIN AND FONMIN HAD INTERPRETED THE GOVERNMENT'S
 PLATFORM AGREEMENT AS MEANING THAT IDF RETENTION OR DEPARTURE
 WOULD NOT BE DECIDED UNTIL STUDIES HAD BEEN CONCLUDED.
 HALIGRIMSSON RECALLED THAT THERE WAS NO ALTHING MAJORITY FOR
 THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE IDF AT THE PRESENT TIME. FURTHERMORE,
 THERE WAS A DISPUTE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING ICELAND'S
 MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. PROBABLY FOUR-FIFTHS OF ALTHING MEMBERS
 WERE IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED NATO MEMBERSHIP AND A CLEAR MAJORITY
 IN FAVOR OF IDF RETENTION UNLESS A SUCCESSFUL MBFR OUTCOME COULD
 BE DEPENDED UPON TO ASSURE ICELAND'S SECURITY.

4. SVAVA JAKOBSDOTTIR, SPEAKING FOR THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED
 SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 REYKJA 00390 131948 Z

PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE, MAINTAINED THE PARTY'S TRADITIONAL LINE.

SHE SAID THAT THE IP' S ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE THE NATION THAT THEY CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT THE IDF IS " A LIE THAT IS NOW BEING REFUTED ALL OVER EUROPE". THE OPPOSITION IS HOPING THAT THE GOVERNMENT

T
WILL FALL ON THE IDF ISSUE. WHILE ADMITTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES WERE NOT IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT ON THE IDF ISSUE, SHE INSISTED THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE PROMISES CONTAINED IN THE ELECTORAL PLATFORM, NAMELY TO ASSURE WITH WITHDRAWAL OF THE IDF BEFORE THE END OF THE PRESENT ELECTORAL PERIOD. SHE AVERRED THAT THIS PROMISE WAS ONE OF THE " CORNER-STONES OF THE COALITION" AND THAT PEOPLE' S ALLIANCE EMPHASIZES THAT FORMAL DISCUSSIONS MUST BE BEGUN WITH THE USG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. COMMENT: EFFORTS DISCUSSED IN REFTEL WERE APPARENTLY HELPFUL IN PERSUADING AGUSTSSON FROM SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING OR INVOKING ARTICLE VII OF DEFENSE AGREEMENT. HE DOES INDICATE CLEARLY THAT NEXT STEP WILL BE TO DECIDE WHEN REVIEW ALL BEGIN, WHICH REPRESENTS CONCESSION TO PA ELEMENTS WHO HAVE BEEN PRESSING FOR GREATER MOVEMENT ON ISSUE. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION REGARDING GOAL OF REVIEW EXIST, HE INSISTS UPON NECESSITY THAT REVIEW TAKE PLACE.

6. NATO STUDY REFERRED TO BY FONMIN IS ONE OF DECEMBER 1971. THERE HAS BEEN NO OTHER. REFERENCE TO SWEDISH STUDY IS TO THAT PREPARED BY AKE SPARRING IN JANUARY- FEBRUARY 1972 (AN UNCLASSIFIED VERSION OF WHICH APPEARED IN THE WORLD TODAY, SEPTEMBER 1972) WHICH CONCLUDES THAT IDF BE RETAINED.

7. AGUSTSSON SPEECH WILL BE FOLLOWED UP NEXT WEEK WITH FONMIN' S ANNUAL FOREIGN POLICY REPORT. MFA DEPSEC GEN INGVARSSON WHO IS DRAFTING THIS REPORT SAYS THERE WILL NOT BE " ANY SURPRISES" IN IT FOR USG. HE HAS INDICATED THAT PHRASEOLOGY WILL DUPLICATE THAT OF ALTHING SPEECH, SIMPLY CALLING FOR EARLY REVIEW OF IDF AGREEMENT.
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